POLS 2305.W06 – U.S. Government and Politics
Spring 2015 Syllabus, Version 1.0
Instructor: Dr. Jennifer L. Epley
Office Location: Bay Hall 341
Office Telephone: (361) 825-2554

Office Hours:
- In person on campus or by telephone on Mondays from 10am-11am and 12pm-1pm; Tuesdays from 11am-12pm; and Wednesdays from 10am-11am and 12pm-1pm.
- By appointment (in case of class or employment conflicts only).

Email: jennifer.epley@tamucc.edu
- Please consider e-mail as official correspondence.
- Efforts will be made to address your e-mail within 48 hours. If you do not receive an email within 48 hours, please send a follow-up email.
- No email correspondence on weekends.
- No email correspondence on the day before an examination or deadline.
- E-mail communications should be about class business. E-mail is not the place for summaries of lectures, discussions, or readings, however.
- Please use the subject line in a way that indicates the content of the message. Please also use professional language and include your full name, section number, and a complete inquiry in the body of the message. Unprofessional emails will result in non-response.
- Please keep copies of e-mails that are sent and received for records purposes.

Course Section Details for Registered Students:
42783 POLS 2305.W06 – U.S. Government & Politics is a fully online course. There are no required face-to-face group meetings for this section.

Required Bundled Textbook and Online McGraw-Hill Connect/LearnSmart Access Available from Campus Bookstore and Direct from Publisher:

Title: Government Matters: American Democracy in Context (paperback)
Authors: John Anthony Maltese, Joseph A. Pika, and W. Phillips Shively
ISBN 9781259139741 / Publisher: McGraw-Hill

The bundle includes a hard copy of the textbook, the ebook version online, and an access code for the online homework problem sets. The access code may be purchased separately, but it might be more expensive on its own. The textbook is available on reserve at the university library on campus as well.

Additional readings (paper and online), websites, and multi-media will be required. These materials will supplement the textbook chapters and the instructor’s lectures. The instructor will provide the copies and links to students in class, via Blackboard, and/or by email.

Required Course Websites:
- Blackboard online (https://iol.tamucc.edu/) → Free access
- McGraw-Hill Connect/LearnSmart Homework Online → Must purchase access code with the assigned required textbook (see above for details)
Course Description and Objectives:
Political Science 2305 (online version) is an introductory course about political science in general and American politics in specific. Together in this course we will develop your ability to analyze various political processes and institutions. We will go beyond the basic facts of history and civics—what political institutions exist, how did they arise, who are the key political figures, etc.—to address basic questions of political science such as: What is the function of government and when does it fulfill or abdicate this function? How do political actors such as politicians and parties attain power? What is the role of institutional rules and procedures? What do citizens think about and do with regard to politics? Such questions and the answers we will find are applicable to us as citizens, residents, and visitors in the United States. These issues are also relevant elsewhere in the world. Through a process of collaboration, cooperation, and discovery, we will develop our knowledge base and skills. Substantive knowledge, critical thinking and analysis, developing and defending arguments, and the clear and concise articulation of ideas and evidence will be important components of the discussions, writings, and evaluations in this course.

Topics covered include, but are not limited to: federalism, the U.S. Constitution, the three branches of government, the bureaucracy, the legal system, public opinion, political behavior, the mass media and politics, political parties, campaigns and elections, interest groups, and how the government and society deal with issues such as personal liberty, rights, the economy, and different domestic and foreign public policies.

Student Learning Objectives for POLS 2305 per the Department of Social Sciences:
The four Core Objectives related to this course are: Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills, Personal Responsibility, and Social Responsibility.

By the end of the semester the course will have met these objectives:

- By having the students engage in critical thinking activities related to the Constitution, the political and philosophical foundations of the nation, governmental institutions, and political behavior.
- By having students engage in written, verbal or visual activities related to the Constitution, the political and philosophical foundations of the nation, governmental institutions, and political behavior.
- By having students engage in course related activities that connect personal responsibility and political ideology to encourage ethical decision making.
- By having students engage in course related activities that connect social responsibility to civil rights, civil liberties, and to voting and voting behavior.

Performance Evaluation and Grading: Your final course grade will consist of…

60% Four Online Major Examinations – Each examination is worth 15% of the course grade. The format will be a combination of multiple choice and true/false items. Exams are administered online. See the attached schedule for details.

20% Online Homework via McGraw-Hill Connect/LearnSmart – There will be regular online homework assignments during the semester. These assignments (also known as “problem sets”) will
supplement and reinforce material from the textbook. See the attached schedule for the homework deadlines.

20% Case Study/Application Responses (CSAR) – There will be five CSARs to be submitted online via Blackboard by small assigned groups during the course of the semester (see schedule for details). Students are expected to thoughtfully engage in active collaborations and discussions on the CSAR documents.

Make-Up Policy:
No late work is accepted for the online homework via McGraw-Hill Connect/LearnSmart or Case Study/Application Responses. No exceptions.

If, for any reason, a student misses a major examination, he/she has permission to take one make-up examination on the same day of the university-scheduled final in the allotted time slot. No more than one make-up examination is permitted. No exceptions. Make-up examinations may be different in content and format from those given previously in the term. Students must sign up in advance so that the instructor has time to make the necessary versions before the final test day. Students who do not sign up in advance will not be permitted to make up any missing exams. Make-up examinations are not opportunities to retake an examination for a better grade.

Example Scenario: A student misses the first exam and takes the other three exams on time. That student has the option to take the first exam on the day of finals. He/she will sign up on the list, thus getting permission to take the first exam. That student will then need to re-study the course material to perform well on the make-up of the first exam.

Grading Scale:
A = 90 – 100  B = 80 – 89  C = 70 – 79  D = 60 – 69  F = 59 and below

Additional Notes:
No extra credit options are available for this course. No exceptions. Please do not request extra credit from the instructor at any point in time (especially at the end of the semester).

Grade Appeal Process:
Assessments – Students have one week from the date that a score is posted on Blackboard for each individual component to make a grade appeal. First see the instructor during office hours to discuss the matter. Students may be asked to submit a written/typed appeal letter for documentation purposes. If after the meeting a student wants to file a formal appeal, he/she should then follow the university’s appeal procedures, which are explained at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. Students may also contact the Office of Student Affairs for assistance.

Final Grade – As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. Students may be asked to submit a written/typed appeal letter for documentation purposes. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE AS OF 11/10/2014 – Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

Dropping a Class: The instructor hopes that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with the instructor before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Please refer to the academic calendar online for information about the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Academic Honor Code: Students are expected to uphold the Academic Honor Code published in the University Student Handbook. The Academic Honor Code is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student’s own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community. Violations of the Academic Honor Code will not be tolerated.

***Academic Dishonesty, Cheating, and Plagiarism***: Academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism of any kind are unacceptable. There are no exceptions. Consequences for academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism include, but are not limited to, a failing grade for an assignment or exam, a failing grade for the course, noncredit for an assignment or exam, additional work, and/or direct referral to university officials.

If academic dishonesty, cheating, or plagiarism is suspected on any assessment, the instructor reserves the right to impose restrictions on future assessments for an individual or the entire class as needed.

Please also note that the university requires that faculty members formally report all instances of academic misconduct. Here is the form for your reference: http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/assets/Academic%20Misconduct%20Incident%20Form%208-17-11-1.pdf and here are the official procedures: http://studentaffairs.tamucc.edu/assets/procedure_academicmisconductcases.pdf

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the use of unauthorized information during a quiz or exam, plagiarism, submitting the same paper for multiple courses without permission, or depriving another student of the ability to perform his or her work. The term cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports,
solving problems, or carrying out other assignments, plagiarism; or (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the university faculty or staff. The term plagiarisim includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. Plagiarism also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling or distribution of term papers or other academic materials. If you have questions about the university’s policy on academic dishonesty, please see the Student Code of Conduct at http://judicialaffairs.tamucc.edu/StudentCofC.html.

Online Classroom Policies:

- Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior online or in person may be instructed to leave the virtual classroom, office, meeting space, etc.

- The instructor will assume that you have made an earnest effort to understand the material. This will allow you to be prepared to engage the material in more detail or address misunderstandings during any online sessions and in person.

- To foster an intellectually supportive environment, students should adhere to the dialogue guidelines (see extra handout).

- STARFISH reporting for all introductory core curriculum courses:

  http://casa.tamucc.edu/starfish.php

  “The Center for Academic Student Achievement is hosting Starfish, an Early Alert software program for identifying undergraduate students who need assistance from academic support services at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. The Early Alert program offers convenient early warning identification capabilities and connects students to a collaborative “Success Network” of faculty, advisors, and specialized support staff to address students’ needs and inquiries in real time.

  The Early Alert program allows faculty and staff to identify the academic needs of TAMUCC’s undergraduate students at any point during the academic term. Starfish provides early alerts, or “flags”, when raised by faculty or staff; generate emails notifying the student, and members of the student’s “Success Network” of course progress and academic concerns needing to be addressed.

  Students can actively engage with members of their “Success Network” at any time. Early Alerts raised for students, however, will elicit an Early Alert response originating from CASA, supplemented by Academic Advising, and may include additional support from campus programs including Student Engagement and Success, Enrollment Management, PASS, and other academic support programs from TAMUCC.”

Progress report will help to identify students’ academic needs, including:
- Poor class attendance
- Low class participation
- Low test or quiz scores
- Missing or incomplete work
- Midterm grades below a C
- In danger of Failing

**Students with Disabilities:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116. Please also contact the instructor early if you require assistance.

**Veterans:** If you are a veteran who is experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the instructor and/or the Disability Services Office at (361) 825-5816. Veterans can find more information online at [http://vets.tamucc.edu/](http://vets.tamucc.edu/).

**Student Caregivers:** If you have caregiving responsibilities (e.g., parent of a child or care for elderly parents) and you anticipate scheduling difficulties, please discuss this at the beginning of the semester with the instructor to work out an appropriate strategy in advance.

**Academic Advising:** The College of Liberal Arts (CLA) requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information, please call (361) 825-3466.

**S.A.I.L. System:** S.A.I.L. is a secure online student portal where you can access your student, academic, and financial aid records at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi. Students can find information related to registration, class schedules, course catalogs, tuition and fees, grades, etc. at [http://sail.tamucc.edu/](http://sail.tamucc.edu/).

**Statement of Academic Continuity:** In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email where possible. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Spring 2015 Academic Calendar from [http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/academic_cal.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/academic_cal.html):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>January 21</th>
<th>Classes begin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 28</td>
<td>Last day to late register or add a class</td>
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</table>
March 16-20 | Spring Break  
- Classes will not meet March 16-20.  
- The campus will be closed March 19-20.

April 10 | Last day to drop a class

May 4 | Last day to withdraw from the University

May 5 | Last day of classes  
Last day to apply for Spring (May) 2015 graduation

May 6 | Reading Day

May 7-8,  
May 11-13 | Final examinations

May 14-15 | Grading days

May 16 | Spring Commencement

→ For the latest information on dates and deadlines, please inquire at the appropriate university office (e.g., Academic Affairs Office, Office of the Registrar, Dean’s Office of your major, main department of your major, etc.), with your academic advisor, and your professors.

Course Schedule: All dates, assignments, and evaluations are subject to change with advanced notice. Please pay attention to Blackboard (https://iol.tamucc.edu/) for updates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
<th>ASSESSMENTS</th>
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| 1-2  | UNIT 1 - Theme: Foundations  
Course Introduction: Syllabus and Introductions plus Academic Advice | Group: Discussion Board Introductions due by 1/28/2015 |
<p>| 2    | Chapter 1: Democracy and American Politics | LearnSmart Problem Set due 1/30/15 by 10pm |
| 3    | Chapter 2: The Founding and the Constitution | LearnSmart Problem Set due 2/6/15 by 10pm |
| 4    | Chapter 3: Federalism | LearnSmart Problem Set due 2/13/15 by 10pm |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Assigned Topics or Assessments</th>
<th>Group CSAR</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Deadlines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Chapters 1, 2, and 3</td>
<td>CSAR #1 - Federalism: Pros &amp; Cons</td>
<td>First Major Examination</td>
<td>2/16/15 by 10pm</td>
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<td>2/17/15 by 10pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>UNIT 2 - Theme: Legal System, Liberties, &amp; Rights</td>
<td>LearnSmart Problem Set</td>
<td></td>
<td>2/20/15 by 10pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chapter 15: The Judiciary</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>Chapter 4: Civil Liberties</td>
<td>CSAR #2 - Civil Liberties: Pros &amp; Cons</td>
<td></td>
<td>3/2/15 by 10pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>Chapter 5: Civil Rights</td>
<td>CSAR #3 - Civil Rights</td>
<td></td>
<td>3/9/15 by 10pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Chapters 15, 4, and 5</td>
<td>Individual: Second Major Examination</td>
<td></td>
<td>3/10/15 by 10pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>UNIT 3 - Theme: Political Voices and Collective Action</td>
<td>LearnSmart Problem Set</td>
<td></td>
<td>3/13/15 by 10pm</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Chapter 7: Political Parties</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>No Assigned Topics or Assessments</td>
<td>SPRING BREAK (MARCH 16-20, 2015)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Chapter 6: Public Opinion and Political Socialization</td>
<td>LearnSmart Problem Set</td>
<td></td>
<td>3/27/15 by 10pm</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Chapter 9: Participation, Voting Behavior, and Campaigns</td>
<td>LearnSmart Problem Set</td>
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<td>4/3/15 by 10pm</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Chapters 7, 6, and 9</td>
<td>CSAR #4 - Political Parties, Personal Ideology, and Elections</td>
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<td>4/6/15 by 10pm</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Individual: Third Major Examination</td>
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<td>4/7/15 by 10pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Due Date</td>
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| 12 | UNIT 4 - Theme: Political Actors and Institutions  
Chapter 10: Interest Groups | LearnSmart Problem Set due 4/10/15 by 10pm |
| 13 | Chapter 11: Media and Politics | LearnSmart Problem Set due 4/17/15 by 10pm |
| 14 | Chapter 12: Congress | LearnSmart Problem Set due 4/24/15 by 10pm |
| 15-16 | Chapter 13: The Presidency | LearnSmart Problem Set due 5/1/15 by 10pm  
Group: CSAR #5 - Politics of Campaign Spending due 5/4/15 by 10pm |
| 16 | Chapters 10, 11, 12, and 13  
plus  
Department-wide post-test requirement  
plus  
Make-up Exam as needed | Individual: Fourth Major Examination due 5/5/15 by 10pm  
Political Science Post-Test due 5/6/15 by 10pm  
Make-up Exam (one only per student for missed exam; not for retesting for better grade) due 5/8/15 by 10pm |
GUIDELINES FOR DIALOGUE

1. Confidentiality. We want to create an atmosphere for open, honest exchange.

2. Our primary commitment is to learn from each other. We will listen to each other and not talk at each other. We acknowledge differences amongst us in backgrounds, skills, interests, and values. We realize that it is these very differences that will increase our awareness and understanding through this process.

3. We will not demean, devalue, or “put down” people for their experiences, lack of experiences, or difference in interpretation of those experiences.

4. We will trust that people are always doing the best they can.

5. Challenge the idea and not the person. If we wish to challenge something that has been said, we will challenge the idea or the practice referred to, not the individual sharing this idea or practice.

6. Speak your discomfort. If something is bothering you, please share this with the group. Often our emotional reactions to this process offer the most valuable learning opportunities.

7. Step Up, Step Back. Be mindful of taking up much more space than others. On the same note, empower yourself to speak up when others are dominating the conversation.

8. Maintain a safe atmosphere.

Source: The Program on Intergroup Relations, University of Michigan, CRLT Handout (page 8), August 26, 2008.
Syllabus / Contract Agreement

I, _________________________________________, have read all of the pages of Dr. Epley’s
(Print your name.)

Spring 2015 syllabus for Political Science 2305.W06 – U.S. Government and Politics. I fully
understand the expectations, rules, regulations, resources, and schedule explained in that
syllabus. I agree to abide by its conditions as well.

_________________________________________
(Signature)

_________________________________________
(Student Number)

_________________________________________
(Date)

_________________________________________
(Course Number & Section)